

Sin against the Holy Ghost

OR,

The Sin unto Death.

Briefly Discours'd of

- I. Proving what this Sin is. . . And,
II. That all other Sins, how great and heinous soever, may be forgiven unto Men; but the Blasphemy against the holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.

To which is added,
Some Instructions how a man may walk and not commit this unpardonable Sin.

Matth. 12. 31. *That all manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, except it be the Sin against the holy Ghost.*

By Mr. Robert Russel.

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Of the Unpardonable Sin

AGAINST THE
HOLY GHOST

Or,

The Sin unto DEATH

1 John V. part of Verſ. 16. *There is a Sin unto Death.*

THERE is no meer Man ſince the Fall that can live without Sin, for all are Sinners. But yet there are Degrees of Sin ſome Sins in their own Nature are ſmal, other are more great and heinous. Many Sins there are that are great, yet Pardonable, and one Sin there is unpardonable; and whoſoeve commits that one Sin ſhal have no forgiveness but muſt for ever bear the weight and puniſhment, both of that and of all his other Sins. There is ſuch a Sin as St. John ſpeaks of here in my Text; that is a Sin unto Death. And now I come to the Explication of the Words from whence I ſhall raiſe this Point of Doctrine:

Doct

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Against the Holy Ghost. 3

Sin Doct. That amongst other Sins committed by fallen Mankind, there is only one Sin that is a sin unto death, and whosoever committeth that, he hath no forgiveness, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.

T Now for my further proceeding on this Subject, I shall lay open to you,

F First, What the Sin unto Death is?

S Secondly, That all our Sins, how great and heinous soever, may be forgiven.

T Thirdly, That this sin alone shall never be forgiven.

F Fourthly, The reason why that sin alone is unpardonable. And then,

L Lastly, I shall conclude all with a few words Application.

I I shall begin first with the Description of this unpardonable sin; where I shall endeavour to make as Plain a Description of it, as possible I can; and in doing of it, I shall shew you Negatively, what is not this sin. 2. I shall shew you Positively what it is.

I I shall shew you Negatively, what is not this Sin unto Death; or in what Degree Man may Sin and yet not commit that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost.

I It is not every quenching of the motions of the Spirit that is that sin, it is true when the Holy Ghost comes with a still Voice & knocks at the Doors of Sinners hearts for entrance, he then comes & strives with them, and secretly

Woe:

Of the Unpardonable Sin
AGAINST THE
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Woos & beseeches them to leave their sin
be converted; yet they quench and stifle all
Motions and bear up their hearts against
and will not be obedient to his heavenly C
now such sin grievously against the holy Gh
But yet this alone is not the unpardonable
against the holy Ghost, for many who have st
it out a long time & have often quenched
grieved the Holy Spirit, yet at last they h
been wrought upon unto sincere Converse

2 A Man may commit many heinous & cry
Sins, & yet not be guilty of the unpardon
sin against the Holy Ghost. A Man may be
Idolater, a Whoremonger, a Fornicator
Murderer, and work witchcraft, and sin w
a very high hand; nay he may live in all m
ner of Filthiness and Lewdness, and yet not
under the Guilt of unpardonable Sin agai
the Holy Ghost. Thus we read 2 Chron
that Manasses sinned with a very high Ha
he was an Idolater, an Inchanter, and wo
ed witchcraft, and dealt with Familiar Spir
& wrought much evil in the sight of the L
And Mary Magdalen had seven devils cast
of her, Luke 8.2. and yet both were pardon

3. A Man may sin presumptuously agai
great Light and Knowledge, and yet not ca
mit this ' Sin unto Death: ' for Peter, w
he denied Christ, he did it against great kn
ledge of Christ, he knew Christ to be his L
and Saviour, he was one of Christ's belo

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Disciples; and for all that how strongly he denied **Christ**, and that with an Oath too : and yet for all that, **Christ** looked upon him with a merciful Eye, and that he repented and was forgiven.

4. It is not every Malicious Sin that is the unpardonable Sin against the **Holy Ghost**; for **St. Paul** certainly had great Malice in his heart when he went on so furiously to Persecute the Church of **GOD**; and yet was converted, and became a **Preacher** of the Gospel of **Christ**, which before he Persecuted.

5. And lastly, It is not final Unbelief, nor final Impenitence, that is the unpardonable Sin against the **Holy Ghost**, tho some be of Opinion, that it is because that Sin is unpardonable; and **Christ** himself hath said, **Mat. 12 31.** ' That all manner of sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven unto Man, except it be the Sin against the **Holy Ghost**. But you are to take the words of our Saviour in their true sense and meaning; it is all manner of Sin and Blasphemy committed within the compass of a Man's Life, that shall be forgiven, except the sin against the **Holy Ghost**; for the sin of final impenitency, and final Unbelief, is not compleated untill the very Moment of a Man's Death; and then you all know, that there is no Repentance and consequently no pardon after death, for **Christ** saith, ' He that Sins against the **Holy Ghost**, hath

Of the unpardonable Sin
 hath no forgiveness, neither in this World,
 nor in the World to come. Now, why
 should Christ say, in this World, if there
 be no space to be forgiven in, in this World?
 But a Man may commit the unpardonable sin
 against the Holy Ghost even many years be-
 fore his Death. Besides there are many thou-
 sands that die in Impenitency and Unbelief,
 and are damned, and yet never committed
 the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost:

Thus have I shewed you Negatively, what
 is, not this unpardonable Sin, none of these
 Sins in particular is that Sin.

2. I come now to shew you positively what
 this Sin unto Death is, & wherein this unpar-
 donable sin against the holy Ghost doth consist.
 Now there are several opinions in the world a-
 bout it; some hold one thing, some another: But
 I have not time nor room to dispute concerning
 others Opinions about it, but I will endeavour,
 through God's help, to lead you to the plain
 sight of it, by the Light of the Holy Scripture.

Now in the first place you must know,
 that there are two sorts of People that can-
 not commit this unpardonable sin.

1. The true Believer cannot commit it,
 tho many times for there Trial, God suffers
 them to fall foully into many grievous Sins
 yet they being rooted into Christ, they are
 upheld by free Grace and Mercy, that they
 cannot fall into this unpardonable Sin.

2. The

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2. The grossly ignorant cannot commit it, because it is a Sin against great Light and Knowledge. Indeed the greatest part of the World shall be damned; yet amongst the greater part, there is but few of them that can commit that unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost.

Some have both Light and Grace, these shall not commit the unpardonable Sin. Again, some have neither light nor grace, these cannot commit it. But there are some again that have Light and no Grace, these are they that are liable to commit the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. Now there must be two ingredients to make up this unpardonable Sin; that is Light in the head, and Malice in the heart; without these two the sin against the holy Ghost cannot be committed: For to sin against great light and knowledge, is not that sin alone; nor yet to sin ignorantly, out of that Malice, is not that sin but they must joyn both together, to make up this unpardonable Sin. This we see by the example of St. Peter and St. Paul, Peter he denied Christ, and forswore himself too, and that grievously against Light and knowledge; for he knew Christ to be the only begotten Son of God, and he knew God in him; he was one of Christs Disciples, and one of his beloved Disciples too; he was taught of Christ, and had experimental knowledge of his Love and Favour, and yet he wickedly

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wickedly with an Oath denied him. Now
if Peter had done this out of Malice and
Spight then he had committed that sin unto
Death, for which there is no Forgiveness.
But Peter had no Malice in his heart all
this while; even at that time when he de-
nied Christ; as you may see Mat. 29. when
Christ told him, 'Before the Cock crow,
' thou shalt deny me thrice. He answered,
' If I should die with thee, I will not deny
thee. And then denying him thro' Infirmitie,
& weakness of the Flesh: when he considered
what he had done, ' he went out and wept
bitterly, V. 75. And Paul, he had great
Malice and Spight against the ways and
People of God; as you may see Acts 9. 1.
Now here was a great Rage and Malice
in Saul, against the Ways and People of God,
but doing it ignorantly he at last hearing a
Voice, ' saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest
thou me? And receiving of a Light from
Heaven, that it was Jesus that he Persecu-
ted, he was pricked at the Heart and trem-
bling and astonished, said, ' Lord, what wilt
' thou have me to do? Now by these two
places of Scripture, you may plainly see, that
Peter sinned against great Light. And Paul
out of great Malice, yet none of them both
committed the unpardonable Sin against the
Holy Ghost. But whensoever Light and
Malice meet together in one Man, then there
is

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Now is a Sin against the Holy Ghost. Now as
e and all other Sins, so this sin against the Holy
unto Ghost may be committed in Thought, Word,
ene for Action.

rt all 1. In Thought, that is, when a wicked man
e de- against his clear Light and Knowledge, doth
when but conceive a malicious Thought or purpose
row, towards persecuting the Gospel of Christ, or
ered, of the Saints of Christ to hinder the work of
deny the Holy Ghost in them.

unity, This Sin is to be thought, was the sin of the
dered lost Angels; for which Cause they were lost
wept without all hopes of Pardon. Now some dis-
great pute whether their sin was a sin of the thought
and but I say with all likelihood it was: For the
9. 1. Angels being only Spirits, without Bodies,
alice and so have no use of bodily Tongues, it
God, could not be committed in word; nor yet
ng a could they commit it in Action, because they
uteff were cast out of Heaven before they could
from bring it into Practice, therefore it must be a sin
secu- of the Thought.

rem- Now their sin was this, Their Habitation
will being in the highest Heavens, next under God
two himself, they had exceeding great light, and
that knowledg; they had more knowledg than all
Paul the men in the world ever had, & were happy
both above all other Creatures; but when not being
the contented with this Estate, they thought to be
and as high as God himself; therefore maliciously
here sought to make war against the Son of God,
is and

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and put him out of his Throne; for which
Cause they were immediatly thrust out of
Heaven, never more to see the Face of Mer-
cy: Thus their sin being of the same Nature
with the sin against the Holy Ghost, they
were excluded all hopes of pardon.

2. This sin may be committed in Word
too; that is, when a Man speaks blasphem-
ously and maliciously of Christ and his holy
way: This was the Sin of the Scribes and
Pharisees, Mark 3. 21. Therefore saith Christ
unto them, Ver. 28. 29.

Now the Reason of this Speech of our
blessed Saviour, is shewed in Vers. 22 be-
cause they said, He hath an unclean spirit;
which plainly shews, that these Scribes had
spoken Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost:
These Scribes were great learned Men, and
they could know no other but that Christ
was the Son of God, and they knew that he
cast out Devils by the Spirit of God; and yet
out of spite to Christ maliciously and blas-
phemously said, 'That he cast out Devils by
' Belzebub the Chief of Devils. Thus these
Scribes committed the unpardonable sin a-
gainst the Holy Ghost: And, that in a word,

3. This sin may be committed in Action
too, that is when a man being once through-
ly enlightened, and entered upon a holy course
of Life, and tasted the Comforts of Gods spi-
rit, and had some fore-taste of the Joys of
Heaven

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which Heaven, and not only makes Profession of the
out of Gospel, but teaches it to others; he at last
Mer- takes a dislike of these holy Courses, and
Nature thro' spite & malice, utterly forsakes, opposes
they and persecutes those good ways of God,
which he before profess and taught. But
Words sum up this Point: This unpardonable sin
hem- against the Holy Ghost is fully described by
holy the Apostle to the Hebrews, Chap. 10. 29.
s and 7 28 Likewise, Heb. 6. 4. 5 6.

Christ Now the sin against the Holy Ghost is
briefly this. It is a wilful and malicious oppo-
sition of the known Truth joined with final
2 be- Apostacy.

1. This sin unto Death is an opposing sin;
s had how to oppose a thing, is to contradict it, or
most: gain say it; when a Man says a thing is so, and
and so, he denies it and says it is not so; when a
Christ Man says a thing must be done, he says again
at he must not, nor shall not be done; but a Man
yet may be an opposing man, and yet cannot com-
blas- mit this sin: Therefore:

2. It is the Truth that we must oppose; that
he feels, he must utterly oppose & reject Christ who
n a- said, I am the Truth John 14. 6 He opposeth
ord, all his Threatnings, and will not believe his
tion promises, & counts him to be a Seducer of the
ugh- People, and counts the Blood of the Coven-
ur- tant to be an unholy thing; nay he also opposes
spie the Spirit of Christ, who is the Spirit of truth:
s of So that he will not obey his motions, and will
aven not

not be led nor guided by him; but a Man may oppose the truth, and yet do it ignorantly: Therefore,

3 It must be the known truth that he opposeth, he must be once enlightened: But you must know, that it is not only a Notion of knowledge and Humane Learning. He may know much of God, and of his will in the Letter of the Word, and yet not capable of committing this unpardonable Sin: But he must be so far enlightened, as to see the Evil that is in sin, and the Excellency of Christ: he must taste of the Heavenly Gift, and be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, and taste of the good word of God, and the Power of the world to come, and by the Blood of the Covenant, which he counts as an unholy thing: he is in part sanctified and cleansed from many Sins; he must have sweet Communion with God in his Word and Sacraments; he must have some Taste of the Love and Favour of God, and Comforts of his Spirit, and be refreshed by it, and taste of the Love and Favour of God, and Comforts of his Spirit, and taste of the joys of Heaven, and have some Fore-taste of the Happiness of the World to come.

4. He must oppose the known Truth willfully, he must willfully fall away, after he hath received the Knowledge of the Truth. Other sins are committed through Infirmity,

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but this sin is wilfull, the will is the direct Actor in it: And to compleat and make up this unpardonable Sin, there is,

5, Malice in the heart; without this, this sin cannot be committed; it must be a malicious opposing of the known Truth.

Now a man having gone thus far, he comes in the last place to be an Apostate: Now for such a one wilfully, spitefully, and maliciously to fall away, he so falls, as never to rise more. It is true the children of God fall and that often, and yet riseth again; but when they fall thro' weakness of infirmity, and not wilfully & maliciously; but these wicked Wretches fall wilfully and maliciously, & so fall finally. Against such, the door of Mercy is ever shut: Concerning such, St. Peter saith, 2 Pet. 2 21, 22. There is such another dreadful place of Scripture against these Apostates; that is, Heb. 10. 26.

Object. ' But what is the reason then that this sin cannot be forgiven.

The reason arises from the nature of this sin; for this sin, by whomsoever it is committed, hardens the heart and sears the conscience; so that there is no place for Repentance to be wrought, neither for that or any other sin. This sin is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, because it is a sin against the Person of the Holy Ghost, so is all sin against his Person, but it is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, because it is against the Office and Work of the Holy Ghost.

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Chor. Now every one of the Three Persons have their particular Work: The work of the Father is to create; the work of the Son is to redeem lost sinners; and the work of the Holy Ghost is to enlighten, convince, sanctifie and convert them. Now a Man committing this unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, rejects all this Work of the Spirit. Now for a Man to be thoroughly enlightened by the Holy Ghost that he comes to know the evil of sin, and of his lost and undone condition without Christ; and that none but the Merits of Christ can save him, then for him wilfully and maliciously to oppose him, and the work of his Spirit and will not be beholding to him for salvation, now for such an one to be forgiven, is utterly impossible.

Object. 'But why is it impossible? No-
'thing is impossible with God.

A man through ignorance may deny Christ, and maliciously fall from the Profession of the Truth into all wickedness, as did St. Paul, and the Jews that crucified Christ, and yet not falling against Light & Knowledg, there is room for the Holy Ghost to work upon him, to enlighten him, and to convince him of his Folly, and so makes way for conversion. And besides, a man after he hath been enlightened, and yet falls back thro' infirmity, and the weakness of the flesh, as Peter did, and doth not fall wilfully and maliciously, then the Holy Ghost may work

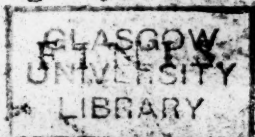
work upon him, and work in him a deep sorrow, for abusing so much love and mercy, and so carry on his good work unto salvation. But for a man when he is once enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and has had some taste of Gods love and favour, and some fore-taste of the joys of heaven, and then at last utterly opposing this illuminating work of the Spirit, & wilfully and maliciously to fall away, & so to reject the spirits renewing work. Alas then the Holy Ghost has done, he has nothing more that he can work in him; for this wretched Creature, has utterly rejected him; his enlightning work his convincing work, his sanctifying work, he has utterly rejected Christs Pardon, heaven & all. Now this poor Wretch is past all hopes of Mercy, all hopes of Pardon; nay, for such a one we are forbidden to pray; as you see in the Verse, wherein my Text is a part. Now Christ prayed for them who maliciously crucified him, Luke 23. 34. 'Saying, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Alas they knew not what they were doing, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory, 1 Cor. 2. 8. But if they had known & yet crucified him, Christ would not have spent his breath to pray for them; for it would have been utterly in vain: For when a Man has committed this unpardonable sin; neither the prayers in heaven nor earth, can do him any good; for as the Text saith, 'There is a sin unto Death.

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I shall conclude with a few words of Application.

1. Watch very diligently against all sins; but above all, take special heed of those sins that come near to the sin against the Holy Ghost & they are these: Hypocrisie, taking only the outward Profession of Religion, & so dissimbling and mocking of God, sinning wilfully against conviction of Conscience, and against great Light & Knowledge; sinning presumptuously, and with an high hand: These sins, though none of them are the direct sin against the Holy Ghost, yet they will come very near to it, therefore take especial heed of them, lest they in time, should bring you to the committing of that unpardonable sin. And,

2. Labour to be sincere in Religion, and by a true Faith ingraft your selves into Christ; for they that be with Christ, can never commit this unpardonable sin: For know this, that amongst all the sins committed by fallen Mankind, there is one sin, that is a sin unto death, which is the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, which whosoever commits it, hath no Forgiveness, neither in this World nor in the World to come.

‘I desire you for to take your Bibles and search the places of Scriptures here cited. And the Lord give you understanding in these things.



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